

Chapter Six

Tourism

Tourism Patterns

Tourism plays a significant role in the economy of Westminster and Carroll County. According to an economic impact study prepared by the Travel Industry Association of America, tourism is a \$57 million/year industry in Carroll County. In 2002, the tourism industry employed almost 600 people, generating just less than \$13 million/year in payroll. The Carroll County Office of Tourism reported in the County's 2003 Economic Development Annual Report that the County's 20 signature events drew nearly 220,000 attendees. The office also reported that tourism interest in Carroll County continues to rise, as shown by a 25% increase in unique visitors to the Tourism Office's web site over FY 2002.

Statewide statistics indicate that the average visitor to Maryland travels with at least one other person from their household, stays 2.8 nights and spends \$334 during their visit. A motor vehicle is the primary mode of transportation for 77% of the travelers to Maryland, while 16% travel by air. More than two-thirds of Maryland visitors travel for pleasure, and another 18% journey to the state for business purposes. The number one activity for Maryland visitors is shopping, followed by visiting beaches, visiting historic sites and museums, participating in outdoor activities, and attending cultural events or festivals.

Existing Attractions, Lodging, and Events

The Westminster area is home to a number of popular tourist attractions and events. They include the historic downtown area of the City, McDaniel College, the Carroll County Farm Museum, seasonal farmers' markets and pick-your-own produce farms, Civil War sites, the summer training camp of the Baltimore Ravens, and other special events, such as the Maryland Wine Festival, the City's Flower and Jazz Festival, and Westminster Fallfest.

Historic Downtown Westminster provides a unique shopping, dining and cultural experience within a small town atmosphere. Downtown's Main Street is pedestrian-oriented with wide sidewalks, mature shade trees, and brick crosswalks. Shopping includes a mix of local retail and service establishments and specialty shops. A number of antique shops also line the corridor. There are also a variety of restaurants, ranging from coffeehouses to fine dining establishments. Many restaurants feature seasonal outdoor dining and regional cuisine, with some ethnic food available as well. The City of Westminster recently constructed two parking decks downtown to ensure adequate parking for residents and guests.

With the rehabilitated historic Carroll Theatre now open and operating as the Carroll Arts Center, Downtown Westminster is solidifying its reputation as a cultural heritage and arts destination. The 263-seat art-deco theatre contains two classrooms, offices for the local arts council, and an art gallery. The Historical Society's three-building campus in the 200 block of

East Main Street is dedicated to the research and preservation of piedmont Maryland's cultural heritage. During the renovation of the Locust Lane Mall in 2003, the City constructed an outdoor stage to provide a performance space in the heart of downtown.

Many historically valuable structures and several historic neighborhoods surround the downtown business district. Most of these buildings and neighborhoods are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Westminster contains a number of churches dating from the 1880s. The neighborhoods of Belle Grove Square, Willis Street, Green Street, and Pennsylvania Avenue are of particular architectural interest. Christopher Weeks' book, *The Building of Westminster in Maryland*, inventories many of these historic resources. The Carroll County Office of Tourism publishes brochures for self-guided walking tours that highlight some of these areas. These brochures also contain information on such topics as ghost walks and Civil War activities in Westminster. All of the brochures are available from the Carroll County Visitor's Center located at 210 East Main Street. Further information regarding Westminster's historic resources is provided in Chapter Seven, Neighborhood Revitalization and Historic Resources.

McDaniel College, formerly known as Western Maryland College and founded in 1867, is a private liberal-arts college located along the western end of Main Street. The college enrolls 1,600 full-time undergraduates and close to 5,000 graduate students, most of whom carry part-time or summer session status. New or potential undergraduate students in particular are often accompanied by their families when traveling to the college, providing an established group of visitors to Westminster. The campus also hosts events that attract non-student visitors. These events include concerts, theatrical productions, conferences, sporting events, and summer sports camps for grammar and high-school aged students.

McDaniel College also serves as the summer home of the Baltimore Ravens. The National Football League team holds its annual summer training camp on the McDaniel College campus in July and August. Attendance at the Ravens' practices and scrimmages over the past five years has averaged slightly higher than 60,000 spectators per camp, with individual camps ranging from 36,036 in 1999 to 111,492 in 2001.

The Carroll County Farm Museum, located at the edge of the City on South Center Street, attracts large numbers of visitors to the Westminster area. Activities at the Farm Museum typically include tours of a 19th Century farmhouse with period furnishings, demonstrations by crafts people such as blacksmiths and spinners, and exhibits of farm machinery. The Farm Museum has also hosted a significant number of special events, including the Maryland Wine Festival, Annual Spring Muster and Antique Fire Equipment Event, Civil War Living History Encampment, July 4th Celebration, American Music & Arts Festival, Blacksmith Days, and Fall Harvest Days. Adjacent to the Farm Museum is the Carroll County Agricultural Center, which is home to a number of events including classes and the County 4-H Fair.

Other tourist-related agricultural activities include farmers markets and "pick-your-own" produce farms. The Downtown Westminster's Farmers Market is open from 8:00 a.m. to noon on Saturdays from the beginning of June until the end of October. Local farmers and bakers sell fresh seasonal vegetables and fruits, potted flowers, herbs and vegetable plants, raw and hand-

spun wool, eggs, and baked goods. A second farmers market in the Westminster area is held on Saturdays at the Agricultural Center. This market includes a mix of fresh produce, prepared foods, and crafts. People who prefer to pick their own fruits and vegetables can visit Baugher's Orchards, just off MD Route 140 to the north of Westminster.

The Civil War is an important historical event that draws many visitors to Westminster. Both Union and Confederate troops passed through the City due to its proximity to the Gettysburg battlefield and the Big Pipe Creek area, where a battle was planned but never occurred. There were both Union and Confederate sympathizers in Westminster, and this division among families and neighbors provides a perspective on the unique issues prevalent in the Border States during the Civil War. The railroad in the center of town became a major supply line for Union forces, the old Union church was used as a hospital for soldiers, and Fairground Hill served as a prison camp. Corbit's Charge, a small but important cavalry skirmish that took place in Westminster on June 29, 1863 was a significant factor in slowing down J.E.B. Stuart's march to Gettysburg. Historians have wondered whether the results of the battle of Gettysburg might have been different if Stuart arrived before July 2. Recognizing the importance of Corbit's Charge, the City of Westminster began an annual commemoration of the event in 2003. The Carroll County Office of Tourism has developed self-guided walking and driving tour brochures that describe Westminster's role in the Gettysburg campaign. In addition, the State of Maryland established a Maryland Civil War Trail in 2003. As part of the trail, four sites in and around Westminster have been designated with Civil War Trail markers and educational signs. A map showing the entire Gettysburg Campaign and a sign describing Corbit's Charge is displayed at the Historical Society campus at 206 East Main Street. Other signs are posted at the Old Courthouse, at the intersection of East Main and Liberty Streets, and at the Farm Museum.

The City expanded its array of outdoor attractions and activities with the completion of the Fenby Farm Quarry and Lime Kiln Park in the Spring of 2000. The project consisted of the reconstruction of the kilns, the installation of a quarry trail, and the placement of a park sign. The interpretive park is located on Tahoma Farm Road, one-quarter mile west of Maryland Route 31. In the 1800s, limestone was taken from the quarry and fired in the kilns to produce quick lime, which was then sold as a fertilizer for cropland, as a component for mortar, or for use in whitewash for house painting. Westminster also is home to two public golf courses that attract visitors from the Central Maryland Region to Westminster. For biking enthusiasts, the Carroll County Office of Tourism has prepared ten loop tours over 150 miles of Carroll County; two of which loop in and around the City of Westminster.

A key ingredient to a visitor's experience is the quality and availability of lodging. Three hotels and motels operate within the City and two breakfast/inns provide unique lodging opportunities. While availability of lodging appears to be adequate overall, times of potential shortages exist, such as when the Baltimore Ravens utilize one hotel during their summer training camp or on weekends of large events at McDaniel College.

Special events are important tourist attractors to the City. In addition to the events at McDaniel College and the Carroll County Farm Museum, the City sponsors or co-sponsors a number of events throughout the year. The major events include the Flower & Jazz festival, Art

in the Park, A Month of Sundays Concert Series, Midnight Madness, and Fallfest. These events draw visitors from throughout Maryland, as well as other states on the East Coast. Other smaller scale events that draw from the Central Maryland region include the Main Street Mile Run, Memorial Day Parade, Antique Fire Equipment Parade, Friday Movie Nights, Corbit's Charge Commemoration Ceremony, Music on Main Street Lunchtime Concerts, Starlight Shopping, the bi-annual Holiday House Tour, and the Holiday Tree Lighting Ceremony.

Current Tourism Programs

Visitors seeking information on attractions and events in Westminster can contact the Carroll County Visitor Center at 210 East Main Street by calling (410) 848 – 1388 or (800) 272 – 1933, emailing cctourism@cag.carr.org, or visiting the Office of Tourism's website at <http://www.carr.org/tourism>. Staff members are available to answer questions and send requested information to potential visitors. In conjunction with the Office of Tourism, the Tourism Council of Carroll County publishes the County's official visitor's guide. This guide provides information on the accommodations, restaurants, and attractions in Carroll County, including the City of Westminster. The Office of Tourism also recently began an advertising campaign encouraging visitors to visit Main Streets in Carroll County.

As part of the Longwell Parking Deck/Locust Lane Renovation Project, the City constructed an information kiosk at the Longwell Parking Deck and a bulletin board under the Locust Lane sign at the East Main Street entrance. Downtown events are posted monthly, along with downtown maps, a downtown parking guide providing the location of public lots, as well as parking information and regulations, and other pertinent information. Downtown quarterly event calendars are included in the Downtown Westminster brochures available at all Maryland Welcome Centers, Westminster City Hall, and various locations in the downtown area. The City also advertises major events on the internet at <http://www.festivals.com>.

With heritage tourism benefiting the Maryland economy second only to water-related tourism, the Maryland Heritage Preservation and Tourism Areas Program was established in 1996 to build on the existing tourism industry in Maryland by promoting heritage tourism. Heritage tourism focuses on historic preservation and areas of natural beauty with economic development as the primary goal. In order to qualify for tax credits and state grants, loans, and technical assistance available under the program, an area must be designated as a Certified Heritage Area by the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority. The City of Westminster is part of the three-county Civil War Heritage Area that has received 'recognized' status from the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority. This Heritage Area includes Carroll, Howard, and Frederick Counties. By concentrating on historic preservation and interpretation, tourism, and economic development, the Civil War Heritage Area will become a leading educational center and tourist destination for Civil War history, a catalyst for economic development, and a model for coordinated heritage tourism and development efforts. To become a Certified Heritage Area, the Civil War Heritage Area must submit a management plan that has been approved by all participating jurisdictions. Submission of the management plan to the local governments is expected in 2004.

Goals and Objectives

Tourism is a key component of economic development for communities across the nation. Tourism is a proven job provider and helps sustain natural assets, culture, and history, which is good for business development. The most recent Maryland Department of Business and Economic Development Tourism Annual Report notes that the same qualities of life that attract tourists to an area attract new businesses and jobs. With these considerations in mind, the following goals and objectives are set for tourism. Recommended actions are located in Chapter Fourteen, Plan Implementation.

Goal 1: Expand the availability of attractions and events in Westminster.

Objectives and recommended actions:

1. Enhance and/or develop existing attractions, events and historic resources.
 - a. Promote the interpretive quarry park and recently reconstructed Fenby Farm Lime Kilns.
 - b. Continue to coordinate events that draw attention to Westminster, particularly the downtown area.
 - c. Support McDaniel College as the permanent location of the Baltimore Ravens summer training camp and encourage promotional events and activities.
2. Support and endorse the certification of the Civil War Heritage Area.
 - a. Coordinate this effort with appropriate agencies in the tri-county area.

Goal 2: Enhance the marketing for attractions and events.

Objectives and recommended actions:

1. Continue to explore opportunities for increasing the advertisement and availability of tourist information, including through the internet.
 - a. Frequently update the section of the City of Westminster's home page that announces attractions and upcoming events.

- b. Pursue additional locations for advertising events, such as the Westminster Branch of the Carroll County Public Library and local hotels.
 - c. Frequently update the information kiosks downtown.
 - d. Pursue the inclusion of a Westminster area historic itinerary tour on the home page of the National Park Service.
 - e. Support and encourage the development and publication of brochures and other materials necessary to effectively market Westminster.
- 2. Further the 'town-gown' relationship to orient McDaniel College students and guests to the resources of Westminster.
 - a. Provide information to the college community regarding attractions and events.
 - b. Encourage local business organizations to provide orientation tours to familiarize new students with Downtown Westminster.
 - c. Support the establishment of a downtown discount card program for McDaniel College students.
- 3. Continue the coordination of marketing activities with the Carroll County Office of Tourism.
 - a. Supply the Visitor's Center with brochures for upcoming events.
 - b. Coordinate with Carroll County Tourism staff to advertise key events at the Maryland Welcome Centers.

Goal 3: Provide a pleasant experience to visitors and new residents.

- 1. Ensure that informational material and maps are current and easy to obtain.
 - a. Develop easy to understand and accurate brochures and rack cards to advertise events.
 - b. Provide welcome packets to new Westminster residents, which could include maps, a business directory, and other information.

- c. Ensure that the City's web page is updated frequently with events and other pertinent information.
2. Provide good signage to attractions, events, and parking.
 - a. Develop a comprehensive and uniform directional sign package leading to parking areas and major attractions downtown.
 - b. Consider the use of variable message boards on major highways to provide information to visitors.
3. Ensure easy access to the traveler's destination, including vehicular and pedestrian access and the availability of parking and transit.
 - a. Direct visitors to use major routes when traveling to points in Westminster.
 - b. Assign additional police officers, as necessary, to monitor traffic control and safety during special events.
 - c. Provide shuttles to remote parking areas when necessary.
 - d. Support the development of alternative transit modes in the downtown area.
4. Encourage the availability of sufficient overnight accommodations in the Westminster area.
 - a. Determine the level of need for additional overnight accommodations.
 - b. Recruit additional hotels to the Westminster area if a need is demonstrated.
5. Inform businesses of special events and/or projects, so that managers can adjust staffing accordingly.
 - a. Provide information regarding the name, location, and time of the event or project, the number of visitors expected, and other pertinent information.
 - b. Coordinate the dissemination of information with the local business associations.